

Vote **NO** on the Douglas County Jail Expansion

*Demand **real solutions** for our community.*

A jail expansion won't address the causes of the problems in our criminal justice system.

In March 2015 there were only 148 residents incarcerated in the Douglas County jail, far below capacity. That was normal for our county: The number of residents incarcerated from January 2007 to March 2015 was 148.5 on average daily.¹

From March 2015 to October 2015, the number of people in our jail skyrocketed, growing from 148 to 238. **That's a 60% increase in just seven months.** We know the incarceration growth was not caused by higher crime because the Douglas County crime rate in 2015 was 34% lower than it was in 2007.

Why does this matter? To find a real solution, we must understand why the jail suddenly became overcrowded. If we try to simply build our way out of this problem, we will not have addressed the root causes of the incarceration increase, and we are likely to find a bigger jail would also be over capacity soon.

We know from the experiences of other counties - and the experiences of Douglas County before 2015 - that it is very possible to reduce jail overcrowding in a community of our size and crime rate through alternatives to incarceration and improved case processing. These solutions can be implemented more quickly than a jail expansion, they are more effective, and they are more sustainable.

We could also learn from other communities like Iowa City, which voted down a jail expansion and then implemented alternatives to incarceration and saw a drop in their jail numbers, and from our neighbors in Johnson County, who have implemented alternatives to incarceration and now have 300 unused jail beds.

We have not exhausted opportunities to reduce our jail population.

The County has invested in some alternatives, but they haven't explored nearly enough of the options that exist, nor have they allowed time to evaluate the full effects of the alternatives they are implementing. A January 2018 report commissioned by Douglas County, for example, recommended 10 improvements to criminal case processing in the county to reduce the average length of stay in our jail. We should implement these recommendations and give them time to work before expanding the jail.

Douglas County had the opportunity to invite national research experts to help evaluate and transform our system, but the county refused.

Jail is not a place for restoration.

When people spend as few as three days in jail, their chances of continued involvement with the justice system increase significantly. **Time spent in jail can cause people to lose their housing, their vehicles, their family connections, and their jobs—and when these stabilizing factors are lost, people are more likely to end up in jail again.** For these reasons, the Vera Institute calls jails the "front door" to mass incarceration.

People of color are disproportionately incarcerated at our jail.

One of the worst hallmarks of mass incarceration is the extremely high rates of incarceration of people of color. Sadly, this is true in Douglas County, too. For example, 22.4% of the people incarcerated at the Douglas County jail are black, compared to 4.6% of all residents in Douglas County. 6.7% of the people incarcerated at our jail are Native American, compared with 2.7% of all Douglas County residents.

DOUGLAS CO.
POPULATION
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JAIL POPULATION
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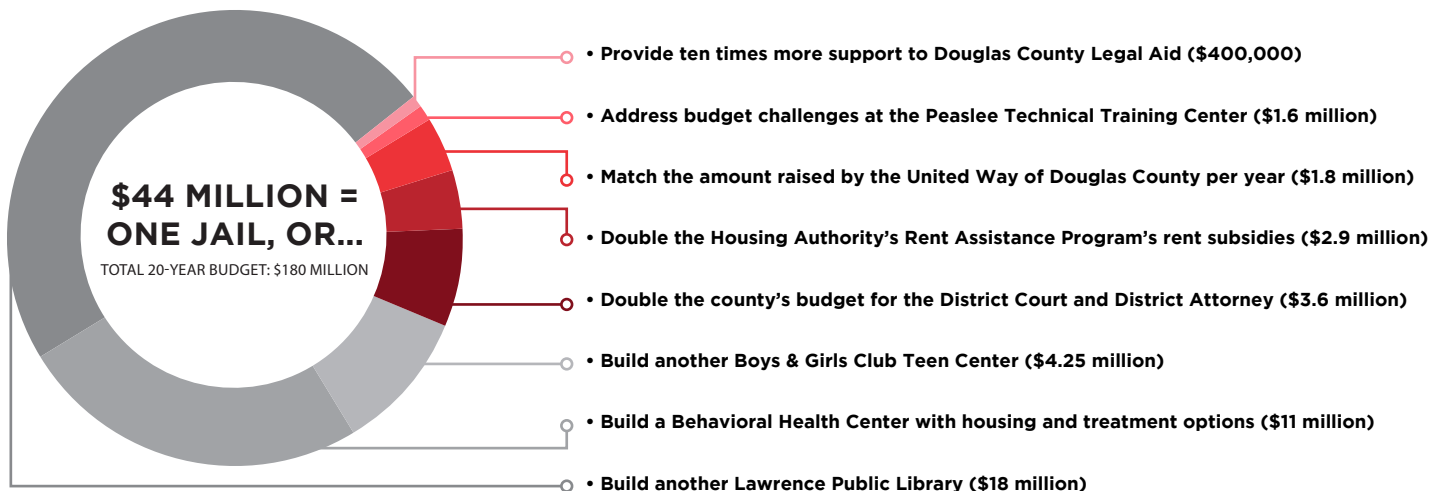
There's a **better way.**
JailNo.org

¹For more information about the claims in this fact sheet, visit JailNo.org

Our limited county money would be better spent on crime prevention and effective restorative services.

In addition to improvements to our criminal justice system, **we need to invest more in community services that help people keep their lives on a positive track**, such as expanded mental health and addiction services, housing, transportation, job training and support, assurance of adequate food, anger management, parenting support, expanded case management, and restorative justice programs in our schools. These programs are more effective and less expensive than a massive jail expansion.

The proposed jail expansion will cost nearly \$165 million over the next 20 years in brick-and-mortar costs, debt interest, and increased operation costs. For just the \$44,000,000 in brick-and-mortar costs, our county could, for example, do all of the following:



The county's proposed 1/2 cent sales tax for the jail expansion will never expire; this is a tax increase that will never go away. The county has also said a "yes" vote for this sales tax increase will require an estimated 3.81 mill increase on property taxes in a few years. **If we vote to expand the jail, we will spend nearly \$165 million over the next 20 years** to jail more residents of Douglas County, to the exclusion of other social and community services that we value.

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Important dates:

April 24: Last day to register to vote

April 25: Ballots go out

May 15: Ballots counted

Register to vote:

www.KSvotes.org

